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MEMORANDUM

To: Robinson Township Planning Commission
From: Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
Date: February 23, 2022
Re: Revisions to Chapter Four – Lowland Resource Conservation, Newly Drafted Chapter Five – Commercial Uses and M-231 Commercial Uses

Pursuant to your direction at your February 8, 2022 meeting, attached is a revised draft of Chapter Four – Lowland Resource Conservation (formerly Environmental). It is important to note that the changes are reflected from a second version of the chapter provided by Commissioner Young following your February 8th meeting. Given this, our usual bold and strikethrough text may not be present, but the changes are included, performed by Commissioner Young. A copy of that second version is attached for your reference. As you will recall, you directed us to perform the following.

- Add “reducing carbon footprint” to paragraph three of the introduction
- Include relevant survey responses within the introduction
- Add the Pigeon River Watershed within the related introduction language
- Change “Bass Creek” to “Bass River”
- Goal 4 – strike “driveways and parking lots” and add “permitted” before “uses”
- Goal 5 – strike “proper use of”
- Recommendation 5 – add “watersheds and its tributaries” after “Pigeon River”
- Change Chapter title to “Lowland Resource Conservation”

We have performed these revisions accordingly and believe the changes to the chapter achieve your direction. As always, additions are shown in bold text and deletions are shown in strikethrough text. Also attached is a clean version of the chapter.

In addition to your direction, Commissioner Vugteveen was to speak with Township Attorney, Ron Bultje, regarding whether the Township could be more restrictive concerning wetlands. We have not been provided the results of that inquiry but anticipate Commissioner Vugteveen will provide an update to the Planning Commission at your March meeting.

Chapter Five – Commercial Uses and M-231 Commercial Uses

Accompanying the revisions to the second draft of Chapter Four, is Chapter Five – Commercial Uses and M-231 Commercial Uses. During our draft of language for general commercial uses, we concluded that it was appropriate to add the same chapter for M-231 rather than maintaining a separate M-231 chapter, which is consistent with the structure of the Residential Uses Chapter. Below is a synopsis of our approach and the proposed language:

- General Commercial Uses Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies – this language is fairly limited within the current Master Plan and has been carried into the draft chapter. While we could add more language in each area, our impression is that the Township is comfortable with limited commercial development and is not interested in significant regulation. As a result, we only propose language to complete connection between the Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies, as well as the routine language concerning groundwater.
- M-231 Goals – while we carried over all of the goals identified within the M-231 Sub-Area Plan, we propose striking two of those goals because they are not consistent

with the intent of Goals within the draft Master Plan. That is, the goals are the community ideals that are applied most frequently during land use review to ensure a proposed development meets and is consistent with the core values of the Master Plan. As those two aforementioned goals are currently worded, we do not believe they can be “put into practice.” That said, we maintain them on the clean version of the language, shown as struck with a placeholder asking the question if you desire to keep them.

- Growth Boundary – page 13 of the Sub-Area Plan describes how an area of land is designated for future growth. While the related characteristics identified by the Plan are relevant, we do not believe that they should mandate a certain area is prepared accordingly. While equations used to be the practice to determine minimum acreage for certain uses (i.e. commercial, industrial) we advise our clients to simply determine the amount of area that is appropriate for their community, related to current trends, along with best planning practices, and “draw the line in the sand.” Consequently, as you examine the Master Plan Map at a future meeting, you could increase or reduce the areas related to the M-231 growth areas. The resulting users will ultimately be shaped by the amount of land dedicated by the Township and the means by which they operate their use.
 - In that regard, we suggest generally relocating pages 13-21 to the Appendix. We also suggest either maintaining the maps within this chapter and/or identifying the areas within the Master Plan Map.
- Throughout the language, the Planning Commission needs to consider the use of “should” in place of “shall” and “shall” in place of “should,” where appropriate. The use of “should” is discretionary, where the use of “shall” is mandatory. As you review the language, please be cognizant of that difference and how strong you believe the draft provisions should apply.

As always, additions are shown in bold text and deletions are shown in strikethrough text. However, all changes are not necessarily shown in bold text because it was easier to paraphrase/reword the exiting language than carry it over and perform our usual edit significations. This was in part because of the conversion of a scanned pdf to a Word document. We hope the changes are easily identifiable. As always, we also reference language in parentheses that was maintained from the current Master Plan. Also attached is a clean version of the chapter.

Planning Commission Considerations

As the Planning Commission deliberates regarding the proposed revisions to Chapter Four and the newly created Chapter Five, we believe the following warrant your review and consideration. They are listed in no particular order:

- Whether the General Commercial Uses Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies are sufficient
- Whether a pedestrian Strategy should be included, as presented in the language, for the Secondary Growth Area
- The use of “shall” versus “should”

We will be prepared to discuss these items further at your March 8, 2022 meeting. If you have any questions, please let us know.

GLR
Principal Planner

Attachments

cc: Frank Johnson, Supervisor

Chapter Four Environmental Lowland Resource Conservation

Introduction

Waterways, wetlands, and forests are important natural resources within the Township. These ecosystems are vulnerable to impact from development and require significant protection. Many of these areas are protected by State and Federal statute and are not conducive to development. The most well-known waterway in Robinson Township is the Grand River, which flows from east to west across the entire width of the Township eventually discharging to Lake Michigan at Grand Haven. **Respondents to the Master Plan Update Community Survey overwhelmingly felt that the Grand River and its bayous are important, with ninety-three percent (93%) indicating they are desirable, up from eighty-three percent (83%) in the 1998 community survey. In addition, almost ninety percent (90%) of respondents believe the Township should take an active role in preserving natural waterways.**

The Grand River drainage basin includes tributaries, regulated wetlands and flood plains, which are home to many varieties of flora and fauna. Stearns Creek flows into Stearns Bayou, which is located within at the northwest part of the Township. Other tributaries include Little Robinson, Bear Creek, and Bass River. The drainage system includes many other drains under the control of the Ottawa County Water Resources Drain Commissioner. Surface water in the extreme southern extent of the Township includes drains that discharge to the Pigeon River Watershed including Walters Drain, South Beeline Drain, Tubbs Creek and Fellows Drain.

The majority of wetlands within the Township are contiguous to the Grand River, its' tributaries, and County drains. There are, however, several scattered areas of wooded wetlands, wet meadows, submergent and emergent wetlands throughout the Township. Along with wetlands, forests play a significant role in the environment by providing a habitat for wildlife, stabilizing soil, preventing erosion, absorbing storm water, **reducing carbon footprint**, and providing a visual screen. **When asked about the protection of wetlands and woodlands within the Township, almost eighty-two percent (82%) of respondents to the Master Plan Update Community Survey believe the Township should take an active role in preserving wetlands, and eighty-five percent (85%) believe the Township should take an active role in preserving forests.**

Proper regulation of these areas will serve to maintain and improve groundwater and surface water quality; preserve wildlife habitat; protect natural watersheds; protect water-based recreational resources of the Township; minimize flood damage to land, buildings and structures; and protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the Township.

As a result of public workshops, the Master Plan Update Community Survey, and various planning meetings we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for the protection of the environment within Robinson Township. In addition, through the use of modern planning principles, where applicable, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Protect wetlands from development
- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area that enhance the rural character of the Township
- Protect and preserve floodplains and wetlands to minimize property damage as well as to maintain environmental interests, including water retention and groundwater recharge areas, which have important ecological and aesthetic scenic value
- Limit property use in areas of frequent flooding should be used for to agriculture, recreation, and other open spaces, or **permitted** uses that would not be subject to flood damage
- As the Grand River is an area wide resource that can seriously affect downstream and upstream conditions, protection of the use of this resource ~~the Grand River~~ to prevent negative effects downstream should be encouraged
- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Recommendations

- [TBD] Protect wetlands from development including excavation and/or fill consistent with State and Federal regulations
- Wooded areas of the Township are considered an asset and efforts should be made to protect them from unnecessary destruction
- Building construction in the floodplain should be discouraged to avoid damage and health hazards created by flood conditions
- Flood Plains of the Grand River and Pigeon River **watersheds and its tributaries** should be protected to eliminate obstructions to flow and navigability, and should not be developed except for marine purposes **consistent with State and Federal regulations**
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new developments in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Strategies

- Adopt or enhance policies and regulations in the floodplain area should be consistent with State of Michigan and Federal guidelines
- Conduct a hydrogeological study, if existing evidence reveals water quality and or quantity concerns
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area

Chapter Four

Lowland Resource Conservation

Introduction

Waterways, wetlands, and forests are important natural resources within the Township. These ecosystems are vulnerable to impact from development and require significant protection. Many of these areas are protected by State and Federal statute and are not conducive to development. The most well-known waterway in Robinson Township is the Grand River, which flows from east to west across the entire width of the Township eventually discharging to Lake Michigan at Grand Haven. Respondents to the Master Plan Update Community Survey overwhelmingly felt that the Grand River and its bayous are important, with ninety-three percent (93%) indicating they are desirable, up from eighty-three percent (83%) in the 1998 community survey. In addition, almost ninety percent (90%) of respondents believe the Township should take an active role in preserving natural waterways.

The Grand River drainage basin includes tributaries, regulated wetlands and flood plains, which are home to many varieties of flora and fauna. Stearns Creek flows into Stearns Bayou, which is located within at the northwest part of the Township. Other tributaries include Little Robinson, Bear Creek, and Bass River. The drainage system includes many other drains under the control of the Ottawa County Water Resources Drain Commissioner. Surface water in the extreme southern extent of the Township includes drains that discharge to the Pigeon River Watershed including Walters Drain, South Beeline Drain, Tubbs Creek and Fellows Drain.

The majority of wetlands within the Township are contiguous to the Grand River, its' tributaries, and County drains. There are, however, several scattered areas of wooded wetlands, wet meadows, submergent and emergent wetlands throughout the Township. Along with wetlands, forests play a significant role in the environment by providing a habitat for wildlife, stabilizing soil, preventing erosion, absorbing storm water, reducing carbon footprint, and providing a visual screen. When asked about the protection of wetlands and woodlands within the Township, almost eighty-two percent (82%) of respondents to the Master Plan Update Community Survey believe the Township should take an active role in preserving wetlands, and eighty-five percent (85%) believe the Township should take an active role in preserving forests.

Proper regulation of these areas will serve to maintain and improve groundwater and surface water quality; preserve wildlife habitat; protect natural watersheds; protect water-based recreational resources of the Township; minimize flood damage to land, buildings and structures; and protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the Township.

As a result of public workshops, the Master Plan Update Community Survey, and various planning meetings we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for the protection of the environment within Robinson Township. In addition, through the use of modern planning principles, where applicable, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Protect wetlands from development
- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area that enhance the rural character of the Township
- Protect and preserve floodplains and wetlands to minimize property damage as well as to maintain environmental interests, including water retention and groundwater recharge areas, which have important ecological and aesthetic scenic value
- Limit property use in areas of frequent flooding should be used for to agriculture, recreation, and other open spaces, or permitted uses that would not be subject to flood damage
- As the Grand River is an area wide resource that can seriously affect downstream and upstream conditions, protection of the use of this resource to prevent negative effects downstream should be encouraged
- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Recommendations

- [TBD] Protect wetlands from development including excavation and/or fill consistent with State and Federal regulations
- Wooded areas of the Township are considered an asset and efforts should be made to protect them from unnecessary destruction
- Building construction in the floodplain should be discouraged to avoid damage and health hazards created by flood conditions
- Flood Plains of the Grand River and Pigeon River watersheds and its tributaries should be protected to eliminate obstructions to flow and navigability, and should not be developed except for marine purposes consistent with State and Federal regulations
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new developments in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Strategies

- Adopt or enhance policies and regulations in the floodplain area should be consistent with State of Michigan and Federal guidelines
- Conduct a hydrogeological study, if existing evidence reveals water quality and or quantity concerns
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area

Chapter Five Commercial Uses & M-231 Commercial Uses

Introduction

While the majority of commercial land use area within the Township is located along Lake Michigan Drive, limited commercial area exists within the northern area of the Township. These areas are recognized as neighborhood commercial or general business areas and generally are established for the purpose of allowing small convenience commercial businesses designed for the use of neighborhood residents. In that regard, respondents to the Master Plan Update Community Survey are almost equally split on whether additional neighborhood commercial development should occur, or less, with approximately thirty-four percent (34%) supporting some additional development and approximately thirty-three percent (33%) supporting less development.

Although some areas of neighborhood commercial may be added in future revisions of the Master Plan as population and development increases the demand for such services, future commercial land use in Robinson Township is primarily intended to be limited to the Lake Michigan Drive and 120th Avenue area as well as the Lincoln Street and M-231 highway area.

M-231 Highway

Construction of the new M-231 highway through the heart of Robinson Township has given rise to concerns over development pressure and appropriate land use at future access points along the route. ~~The M-231 Sub-Area Plan ("Sub-Area Plan"), therefore, Given this, the related language herein is intended to~~ addresses planning, growth, and development issues for ~~two target areas: land in the vicinity of the M-231 intersections with M-45, sometimes referred to as Lake Michigan Drive in this document, and Lincoln Street. These locations are priorities because they are the two interchanges anticipated to be marketable for future development. This plan builds upon and supplements the Township's long range master plan by providing more detailed recommendations for these two subareas in an effort to balance preservation of prized community assets with economic growth opportunities.~~ (Moved from M-231 Sub-area Plan, page 1) These provisions were first adopted by the Township in the year 2015 for the same purpose.

As a result of the Master Plan Update Community Survey, the Township found that approximately thirty-five percent (35%) of respondents desire some additional commercial development on Lake Michigan Drive, whereas approximately twenty-six percent (26%) desire less development.

As a result of public workshops, the Master Plan Update Community Survey, and various planning meetings we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for general commercial uses and commercial uses along the M-231 highway area within Robinson Township. In addition, through the use of modern planning principles, where applicable, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

General Commercial Uses

Goals

- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area that provide rural character **(Moved from Chapter 4, page 29, and duplicated from draft Residential Chapter)**
- Maintain the rural character of the community **(Moved from Chapter 4, page 29, and duplicated from draft Residential Chapter)**
- Commercial facilities should be large enough and so spaced that they will provide citizens with reasonable accessibility and diversification **(Moved from Chapter 4, page 30)**
- Commercial uses should be well integrated with surrounding development through appropriate landscaping, greenbelts, adequate access, parking, and pedestrian pathways
- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Recommendations

- ~~Business and Commercial areas uses shall should be compact, grouped and consolidated into functional units providing sufficient off street parking and loading facilities, pedestrian and vehicle safety, a minimum of traffic congestion, and direct access from residential areas (Moved from Chapter 4, page 30)~~
- ~~Business and Commercial areas uses shall should be compact, grouped and consolidated into functional units providing sufficient off street parking and loading facilities, pedestrian and vehicle safety, a minimum of traffic congestion, and direct access from residential areas (Moved from Chapter 4, page 30)~~
- Commercial "strip" development should be discouraged to minimize check traffic and land use problems **(Moved from Chapter 4, page 30)**
- ~~Business and commercial areas should be compact, grouped and consolidated into functional units providing sufficient off street parking and loading facilities, pedestrian and vehicle safety, and a minimum of traffic congestion. Shopping access along major streets should be limited since this creates traffic congestion by causing too many turning movements and scattered development that is uneconomic to proprietors and inconvenient to patrons. The traffic flow on M 45, as a State Highway, should not be restricted by excessive ingress/egress for commercial enterprises. Interconnect service drives to improve traffic distribution and to promote proper access management~~
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new developments in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Strategies

- Strengthen requirements for site design, which address but are not necessarily limited to, building materials, location and design of refuse storage areas, location and screening of service and delivery areas, parking lot design, lighting, landscaping, pedestrian safety, and site access
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area

M-231 Commercial Uses

The basis for the following Goals and Recommendations is available within the Appendix.

Goals

- To establish a pattern of land use which will promote the highest degree of health, safety, and general welfare for all segments of the community **(Moved from M-231 Sub-area Plan, page 1)**
- ~~To work towards the ideal community using the most economical means, yet not depriving the residents of those services, facilities, and values necessary to maintain desirable living conditions; nor depriving a reasonable freedom of choice to private interests~~ **(Moved from M-231 Sub-area Plan, page 1)**
- To preserve and protect the natural resources of the area, while maintaining the necessary balance between the social and economic needs of the Township **(Moved from M-231 Sub-area Plan, page 1)**
- Preserve the rural landscape and protect the existing rural community character and atmosphere **(Moved from M-231 Sub-area Plan, page 2)**
- ~~Consolidate and focus future development to planned and prioritized target areas~~ **(Moved from M-231 Sub-area Plan, page 2)**
- Prioritize environmental and natural resource protection **(Moved from M-231 Sub-area Plan, page 2)**
- Ensure a safe multi-user transportation network, ~~through including~~ sidewalks, pathways, crossings, and access management **(Moved from M-231 Sub-area Plan, page 2)**
- Capitalize on the opportunities for future parks, recreational facilities, and trails **(Moved from M-231 Sub-area Plan, page 2)**
- Promote harmonious and organized development consistent with adjacent land uses and ensure high quality site and building design that contributes to the character of the community **(Moved from M-231 Sub-area Plan, page 2)**
- Restrict consideration of sewer infrastructure to planned primary development areas **(Moved from M-231 Sub-area Plan, page 2)**
- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Primary Growth Area Recommendations

- Highway Commercial properties should provide for: **(Reworded from Sub-area plan, pages 24 and 25)**
 - Buildings that are designed in clusters rather than in-line
 - Buildings that do not exceed two stories in height
 - Building design that achieves rural character
 - Multi-tenant buildings designed to appear to be divided into smaller elements by indentations, different building materials, architectural treatments, etcetera
 - Street corner buildings shall:
 - Be located as close to the right-of-way as practicable
 - Provide a civic space adjacent to the corner
 - Contain distinctive architectural features that promote pedestrians
 - Landscaping that softens the visual impact of buildings and creates a defined sense of arrival along the street edge
 - Few driveways with the interconnection of service drives to improve traffic distribution and to promote proper access management **(Concept from Map 2)**
 - Shared parking facilities located in the side or rear yards
 - Safe pedestrian circulation internally and along right-of-ways
 - Decorative lighting
 - **No loading docks**
- Community Commercial properties should provide for: **(Reworded from Sub-area plan, page 27)**
 - Multi-tenant buildings designed to appear to be divided into smaller elements with building articulation, architectural elements, change of color and materials, etcetera
 - Buildings that do not exceed two stories in height
 - Building fronts facing the right-of-way
 - No more than two wall materials (not including foundation or trim)
 - Separation between materials as primarily horizontal
 - Heavier façade materials below lighter façade materials
 - Stone material, if any, as the secondary or accent material
 - Landscape parking areas
 - Exterior site buffering to soften visual impacts
 - Safe pedestrian circulation internally and along right-of-ways
 - Public spaces and open spaces
 - Internal driveway connection to shared drives or interior roadways
 - Loading docks and overhead doors in non-street facing facades
- **Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new developments in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative**

Primary Growth Area Strategies

- **Maintain or strengthen design standards provided in Chapter 18 of the Zoning Ordinance**
- **Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area**

Secondary Growth Area Recommendations

- **Properties should provide for: (Reworded from Subarea plan, page 31)**
 - Safe pedestrian and bicycle circulation internally and along right-of-ways
 - Storefronts that are oriented to address and enhance public areas and pedestrian pathways
 - Shared parking and **interconnect service drives to improve traffic distribution and to promote proper access management (Concept from Map 2)**
 - Building facades parallel to the street with major roof ridges either parallel or perpendicular to the street to be consistent with established patterns, and street level porches to emphasize entrances and create a public realm
 - Barn like structures that do not exceed one to one and a half stories
 - Civic buildings and public gathering places that reinforce community identity
 - Buildings placed between Lincoln Street and associated parking areas, with parking in the rear or sides of buildings
 - Reduced **or zero** front yard setback to bring uses closer to the street, to create neighborhood scale
- **Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new developments in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative**

Secondary Growth Area Strategies

- **Maintain or strengthen design standards provided in Chapter 17 of the Zoning Ordinance**
 - **Consider standards to promote pedestrian safety**
- **Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area**

Chapter Four

Environmental

Introduction

Waterways, wetlands, and forests are important natural resources within the Township. These ecosystems are vulnerable to impact from development and require significant protection. Many of these areas are protected by State and Federal statute and are not conducive to development. The most well-known waterway in Robinson Township is the Grand River, which flows from east to west across the entire width of the Township eventually discharging to Lake Michigan at Grand Haven. The Grand River drainage basin includes tributaries, regulated wetlands and flood plains, which are home to many varieties of flora and fauna. Stearns Creek flows into Stearns Bayou, which is located within at the northwest part of the Township. Other tributaries include Little Robinson, ~~Wolf Creek~~, Bear Creek, and Bass ~~Creek~~River. The drainage system includes many other drains under the control of the Ottawa County Water Resources Drain Commissioner. Surface water in the extreme southern extent of the Township includes drains that discharge to the Pigeon River Watershed including Walters Drain, South Beeline Drain, Tubbs Creek and Fellows Drain.

The majority of wetlands within the Township are contiguous to the Grand River, the Township its' tributaries and County drains. There are, however, several scattered areas of wooded wetlands, wet meadows, submergent and emergent wetlands throughout the Township. Along with wetlands, forests play a significant role in the environment by providing a habitat for wildlife, stabilizing soil, preventing erosion, absorbing storm water, and providing a visual screen. (Moved from Chapter 2, page 18)

Proper regulation of these areas will serve to maintain and improve groundwater and surface water quality; preserve wildlife habitat; protect natural watersheds; protect water-based recreational resources of the Township; minimize flood damage to land, buildings and structures; and protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the Township. (Copied from Chapter 9 of the Zoning Ordinance)

As a result of public workshops, the Master Plan Update Community Survey, and various planning meetings we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for the protection of the environment within Robinson Township. In addition, through the use of modern planning principles, where applicable, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

Goals

- Protect wetlands from development
- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area that enhance the rural character of the Township. (Previously moved from Chapter 4, page 29)
- Protect and preserve floodplains and wetlands to minimize property damage as well as to maintain environmental interests, including water retention and groundwater recharge areas, which have important ecological and aesthetic scenic value (Previously moved from Chapter 4, page 29)

- Limit property use in areas of frequent flooding should be used for to agriculture, recreation, ~~driveways, parking lots~~ and other open spaces, or uses that would not be subject to flood damage (Moved from Chapter 4, page 32)
- As the Grand River is an area wide resource that can seriously affect downstream and upstream conditions, Protect ~~proper~~ use of this resource the Grand River to prevent negative effects downstream should be encouraged (Moved from Chapter 4, page 32)
- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative (Duplicated from previous chapters)

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Recommendations

- TBD Protect wetlands ~~from to ensure that they are not encroached by development (Previously moved from Chapter 2, page 18)~~
- ~~D~~development including excavation and/or fill consistent with State and Federal regulations in wetland areas should be discouraged prohibited (Moved from Chapter 4, page 32)
- Wooded areas of the Township are considered an asset and efforts should be made to protect them from unnecessary destruction (Previously moved from Chapter 2, page 18)
- Building construction in the floodplain should be discouraged to avoid damage and health hazards created by flood conditions (Moved from Chapter 4, page 32)
- Flood Plains of the Grand River and Pigeon River and its' tributaries should be protected to eliminate obstructions to flow and navigability, and should not be developed except for marine purposes (Moved from Chapter 4, page 32)
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new developments in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative (Duplicated from previous chapters)

Strategies

- Adopt or enhance policies and regulations in the floodplain area should be consistent with State of Michigan and Federal guidelines (Moved from Chapter 4, page 32)
- Conduct a hydrogeological study, if existing evidence reveals water quality and or quantity concerns (Duplicated from previous chapters)
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area (Duplicated from previous chapters)

Chapter Five Commercial Uses & M-231 Commercial Uses

Introduction

While the majority of commercial land use area within the Township is located along Lake Michigan Drive, limited commercial area exists within the northern area of the Township. These areas are recognized as neighborhood commercial or general business areas and generally are established for the purpose of allowing small convenience commercial businesses designed for the use of neighborhood residents. In that regard, respondents to the Master Plan Update Community Survey are almost equally split on whether additional neighborhood commercial development should occur, or less, with approximately thirty-four percent (34%) supporting some additional development and approximately thirty-three percent (33%) supporting less development.

Although some areas of neighborhood commercial may be added in future revisions of the Master Plan as population and development increases the demand for such services, future commercial land use in Robinson Township is primarily intended to be limited to the Lake Michigan Drive and 120th Avenue area as well as the Lincoln Street and M-231 highway area.

M-231 Highway

Construction of the new M-231 highway through the heart of Robinson Township has given rise to concerns over development pressure and appropriate land use at access points along the route. Given this, the related language herein addresses planning, growth, and development issues for land in the vicinity of the M-231 intersections with Lake Michigan Drive and Lincoln Street in an effort to balance preservation of prized community assets with economic growth opportunities. These provisions were first adopted by the Township in the year 2015 for the same purpose.

As a result of the Master Plan Update Community Survey, the Township found that approximately thirty-five percent (35%) of respondents desire some additional commercial development on Lake Michigan Drive, whereas approximately twenty-six percent (26%) desire less development.

As a result of public workshops, the Master Plan Update Community Survey, and various planning meetings we have concluded that the following goals are paramount for general commercial uses and commercial uses along the M-231 highway area within Robinson Township. In addition, through the use of modern planning principles, where applicable, recommendations regarding these goals as well as strategies to achieve success are provided below.

Goals, Recommendations, and Strategies

General Commercial Uses

Goals

- Preserve and protect the natural resources of the area that provide rural character
- Maintain the rural character of the community
- Commercial facilities should provide citizens with accessibility and diversification
- Commercial uses should be well integrated with surrounding development through appropriate landscaping, greenbelts, adequate access, parking, and pedestrian pathways
- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Recommendations

- Commercial uses shall provide sufficient off street parking and loading facilities, and minimize traffic congestion
- Commercial uses shall provide sufficient pedestrian access
- Commercial "strip" development should be discouraged to minimize traffic and land use problems
- Interconnect service drives to improve traffic distribution and to promote proper access management
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new developments in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Strategies

- Strengthen requirements for site design, which address but are not necessarily limited to, building materials, location and design of refuse storage areas, location and screening of service and delivery areas, parking lot design, lighting, landscaping, pedestrian safety, and site access
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area

M-231 Commercial Uses

The basis for the following Goals and Recommendations is available within the Appendix.

Goals

- To establish a pattern of land use which will promote the highest degree of health, safety, and general welfare for all segments of the community
- ~~[Keep?] To work towards the ideal community using the most economical means, yet not depriving the residents of those services, facilities, and values necessary to maintain desirable living conditions; nor depriving a reasonable freedom of choice to private interests~~
- To preserve and protect the natural resources of the area, while maintaining the necessary balance between the social and economic needs of the Township
- Preserve the rural landscape and protect the existing rural community character and atmosphere
- ~~[Keep?] Consolidate and focus future development to planned and prioritized target areas~~
- Prioritize environmental and natural resource protection
- Ensure a safe multi-user transportation network, through sidewalks, pathways, crossings, and access management
- Capitalize on the opportunities for future parks, recreational facilities, and trails
- Promote harmonious and organized development consistent with adjacent land uses and ensure high quality site and building design that contributes to the character of the community
- Restrict consideration of sewer infrastructure to planned primary development areas
- Provide protection of groundwater sources, particularly within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Primary Growth Area Recommendations

- Highway Commercial properties should provide for:
 - Buildings that are designed in clusters rather than in-line
 - Buildings that do not exceed two stories in height
 - Building design that achieves rural character
 - Multi-tenant buildings designed to appear to be divided into smaller elements by indentations, different building materials, architectural treatments, etcetera
 - Street corner buildings shall:
 - Be located as close to the right-of-way as practicable
 - Provide a civic space adjacent to the corner
 - Contain distinctive architectural features that promote pedestrians
 - Landscaping that softens the visual impact of buildings and creates a defined sense of arrival along the street edge
 - Few driveways with the interconnection of service drives to improve traffic distribution and to promote proper access management

- Shared parking facilities located in the side or rear yards
- Safe pedestrian circulation internally and along right-of-ways
- Decorative lighting
- No loading docks
- Community Commercial properties should provide for:
 - Multi-tenant buildings designed to appear to be divided into smaller elements with building articulation, architectural elements, change of color and materials, etcetera
 - Buildings that do not exceed two stories in height
 - Building fronts facing the right-of-way
 - No more than two wall materials (not including foundation or trim)
 - Separation between materials as primarily horizontal
 - Heavier façade materials below lighter façade materials
 - Stone material, if any, as the secondary or accent material
 - Landscape parking areas
 - Exterior site buffering to soften visual impacts
 - Safe pedestrian circulation internally and along right-of-ways
 - Public spaces and open spaces
 - Internal driveway connection to shared drives or interior roadways
 - Loading docks and overhead doors in non-street facing facades
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new developments in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Primary Growth Area Strategies

- Maintain or strengthen design standards provided in Chapter 18 of the Zoning Ordinance
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area

Secondary Growth Area Recommendations

- Properties should provide for:
 - Safe pedestrian and bicycle circulation internally and along right-of-ways
 - Storefronts that are oriented to address and enhance public areas and pedestrian pathways
 - Shared parking and interconnect service drives to improve traffic distribution and to promote proper access management
 - Building facades parallel to the street with major roof ridges either parallel or perpendicular to the street to be consistent with established patterns, and street level porches to emphasize entrances and create a public realm
 - Barn like structures that do not exceed one to one and a half stories
 - Civic buildings and public gathering places that reinforce community identity
 - Buildings placed between Lincoln Street and associated parking areas, with parking in the rear or sides of buildings

- Reduced or zero front yard setback to bring uses closer to the street, to create neighborhood scale
- Encourage groundwater preservation practices for new developments in accordance with Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative

Secondary Growth Area Strategies

- Maintain or strengthen design standards provided in Chapter 17 of the Zoning Ordinance
 - Consider standards to promote pedestrian safety
- Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which would negatively impact the Recharge Area